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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2015

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/70/482)*]

70/132. Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 56/129 of 19 December 2001, 58/146 of 22 December 2003, 60/138 of 16 December 2005, 62/136 of 18 December 2007, 64/140 of 18 December 2009, 66/129 of 19 December 2011 and 68/139 of 18 December 2013,

Affirming the obligation of all States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and also that all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women and girls, are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[2] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[2] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[3] the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[4] the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[5] and other human rights instruments,

Taking note of the provisions pertaining to women and girls in rural areas contained in the outcome documents of relevant international conferences and summits, in particular the Beijing Declaration[6] and Platform for Action[7] adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"[8] and the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples,[9] and recalling other instruments, as appropriate, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development,[10]

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).
[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.
[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.
[4] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.
[5] Ibid., vol. 2515, No. 44910.
[6] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.
[7] Ibid., annex II.
[8] Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.
[9] Resolution 69/2.
[10] Resolution 41/128, annex.

Please recycle

Welcoming the adoption of the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",[11] and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,[12]

Recalling that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development addresses the need to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in order to ensure that no one is left behind,

Recognizing that rural women are critical agents in poverty reduction, that they are crucial to the achievement of food security and nutrition in poor and vulnerable households and to environmental sustainability and that, in other ways, they are also critical to the achievement of all of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Expressing concern that rural women continue to be economically and socially disadvantaged because of their limited access to economic resources and opportunities, their limited or lack of access to quality education, health-care services, justice, land, water and sanitation and other resources, as well as to credit, extension services and agricultural inputs, and expressing concern also about their exclusion from planning and decision-making and their disproportionate burden of unpaid care work,

Recognizing the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security[13] and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems,[14] endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security, which embrace gender equality as one of the main guiding principles of implementation in order to help address the ongoing disparities with regard to access to and control of land and other natural resources,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[15]

2. *Urges* Member States, in collaboration with the organizations of the United Nations system and civil society, as appropriate, to continue their efforts to implement the outcome of and to ensure an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the relevant United Nations conferences and summits, including their reviews, and to attach greater importance to the improvement of the situation of rural women and girls, in their national, regional and global development strategies by, inter alia:

(*a*) Creating an enabling environment for improving their situation and ensuring systematic attention to their needs, priorities and contributions, including through enhanced cooperation and a gender perspective, and their full and equal participation in the development, implementation and follow-up of macroeconomic policies, including development policies and programmes and poverty eradication strategies, including poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist, aimed at implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;[11]

(*b*) Pursuing the political and socioeconomic empowerment of rural women and supporting their full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels, including through affirmative action, where appropriate, including by promoting and

[11] Resolution 70/1.
[12] Resolution 69/313, annex.
[13] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, document CL 144/9 (C 2013/20), appendix D.
[14] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, document C 2015/20, appendix D.
[15] A/70/204.

protecting the right to vote and to be elected and the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and through support for women's and farmers' organizations in which subsistence and smallholder women farmers are members, labour unions or other associations and civil society groups promoting rural women's rights;

(*c*) Promoting consultation with and the participation of rural women, including indigenous women, women with disabilities and older women, through their organizations and networks, in the design, development and implementation of and follow-up to programmes and strategies for gender equality, the empowerment of women and rural development;

(*d*) Ensuring that the perspectives of rural women are taken into account and that they participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to conflict prevention, the mitigation of post-conflict situations, peace mediation, the impacts of climate change and emergencies, including natural disasters, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, and taking appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against rural women and girls in this regard;

(*e*) Integrating a gender perspective into the design, implementation and evaluation of and follow-up to development policies, plans and programmes, including budget policies, where lacking, ensuring coordination between line ministries, gender policymakers, gender machineries and other relevant government organizations and institutions with gender expertise, and paying increased attention to the needs of rural women to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes adopted in all spheres and that the disproportionate number of rural women living in poverty is reduced;

(*f*) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in decision-making processes and the governance of natural resources, leveraging the participation and influence of women in managing the sustainable use of natural resources, and enhancing the capacities of Governments, civil society and development partners to better understand and address gender issues in the management and governance of natural resources;

(*g*) Strengthening measures, including resource generation, to improve women's health, including maternal health, by addressing the specific health, nutrition and basic needs of rural women and taking concrete measures to enhance and provide access to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health for women of all ages in rural areas, as well as quality, affordable and universally accessible primary health care and support services, including prenatal and postnatal health care, emergency obstetric care, family planning, information and education, increasing knowledge, awareness and support for the elimination of harmful practices and the prevention, treatment and care of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[16] the Beijing Platform for Action[7] and the outcome documents of their review conferences;

(*h*) Promoting sustainable infrastructure, access to safe drinking water and sanitation and safe cooking and heating practices to improve the health and nutrition of rural women and girls;

[16] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

(*i*) Investing in and strengthening efforts to meet the basic needs of rural women, including needs relating to their food security and nutrition and that of their families, and to promote adequate standards of living for them, as well as decent conditions for work and access to local, regional and global markets through improved availability, access to and use of critical rural infrastructure, such as energy and transport, science and technology, local services, capacity-building and human resources development measures and the provision of a safe and reliable water supply and sanitation, nutritional programmes, affordable housing programmes, education and literacy programmes, social support measures and health care, including HIV prevention, treatment, care, including psychosocial aspects, and support services;

(*j*) Designing and implementing national policies and legal frameworks that promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by rural women and girls, and creating an environment that does not tolerate violations or abuses of their rights, including domestic violence, sexual violence and all other forms of gender-based violence and discrimination;

(*k*) Ensuring that the rights of older women in rural areas are taken into account with regard to their equal access to basic social services, appropriate social protection and/or social security measures, equal access to and control of economic resources and their empowerment through access to financial and infrastructure services, with special focus on the provision of support to older women, including indigenous women, who often have access to few resources and are more vulnerable;

(*l*) Valuing and supporting the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women in rural areas, in the conservation and sustainable use of traditional crops and biodiversity for present and future generations as an essential contribution to food security and nutrition;

(*m*) Promoting the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural areas, including by ensuring access on an equal basis to productive employment and decent work, economic and financial resources and disability-sensitive infrastructure and services, in particular in relation to health and education, as well as by ensuring that their priorities and needs are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, inter alia, through their participation in decision-making processes;

(*n*) Developing specific assistance programmes and advisory services to promote economic skills of rural women in banking, modern trading and financial procedures and providing microcredit and other financial and business services to a greater number of women in rural areas, in particular female heads of households, for their economic empowerment;

(*o*) Supporting women entrepreneurs and women smallholder farmers, including those in subsistence farming, by continuing to provide public investment and to encourage private investment in rural women to close the gender gap in agriculture, and facilitating their access to extension and financial services, agricultural inputs and land, water sanitation and irrigation, markets and innovative technologies;

(*p*) Mobilizing resources, including at the national level and through official development assistance, for increasing women's access to existing savings and credit schemes, as well as targeted programmes that provide women with capital, knowledge and tools that enhance their economic capacities;

(*q*) Seeking to ensure and improve equal access for rural women to decent work in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, supporting and promoting

opportunities in small enterprises, sustainable social enterprises and cooperatives and improving working conditions;

(*r*) Investing in infrastructure and in time- and labour-saving technologies, especially in rural areas, benefiting women and girls by reducing their burden of domestic activities, affording the opportunity for girls to attend school and for women to engage in self-employment or to participate in the labour market;

(*s*) Taking steps to ensure that women's and girls' unpaid work and contributions to on-farm and off-farm production are recognized, and promoting shared responsibility within the household with a view to reducing and equitably distributing the burden of such unpaid work;

(*t*) Supporting remunerative non-agricultural employment for rural women, including in the informal sector, including measures to improve working conditions, increase access to productive resources, invest in relevant infrastructure, public services and time- and labour-saving technologies, promote rural women's paid employment in the formal economy and address the structural and underlying causes of the difficult conditions faced by rural women;

(*u*) Promoting programmes and services to enable rural women and men to reconcile their work and family responsibilities and to encourage men to share, equally with women, household, childcare and other care responsibilities;

(*v*) Developing strategies to decrease women's vulnerability to environmental factors and the impact of climate change while promoting rural women's full and equal participation in protecting the environment;

(*w*) Considering the adoption, where appropriate, of national legislation to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of women in indigenous and local communities relating to traditional medicines, biodiversity and indigenous technologies;

(*x*) Addressing the lack of quality, accessible, timely and reliable data disaggregated by sex and age and statistical information on disabilities, to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind, including by intensifying efforts to include women's unpaid work in official statistics, and developing a systematic and comparative research base on rural women that will inform policy and programme decisions;

(*y*) Strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant government institutions to collect, analyse and disseminate data, disaggregated by sex and age, and gender statistics on time use, unpaid work, land tenure, energy, water and sanitation, among other things, to support policies and actions to improve the situation of rural women and girls;

(*z*) Designing, revising and implementing laws to ensure that rural women are accorded full and equal rights to own and lease land and other property, including through the equal rights to economic resources, access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinancing, and undertaking administrative reforms and all necessary measures to give women the same right as men to credit, capital, appropriate technologies and access to markets and information, and to ensure their equal access to justice and legal support;

(*aa*) Supporting a gender-sensitive education system, including through approaches that attract and retain female students and teachers and that consider the specific needs of rural women and girls in order to eliminate gender stereotypes and

discriminatory tendencies affecting them, including through community-based dialogue involving women and men and girls and boys;

(*bb*) Promoting education, training and relevant information programmes for rural and farming women through the use of affordable and appropriate technologies and the mass media, and taking concrete measures to improve rural women's skills, productivity and employment opportunities through technical, agricultural and vocational education and training;

3. *Encourages* Member States, United Nations entities and all other relevant stakeholders to promote access to social protection for female-headed rural households;

4. *Requests* the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular those dealing with issues of development, to address and support the empowerment of rural women and their specific needs in their programmes and strategies;

5. *Stresses* the need to identify the best practices for ensuring that rural women have access to and full and equal participation in the area of information and communications technology, to address the priorities and needs of rural women and girls as active users of information and to ensure their participation in developing and implementing global, regional and national information and communications technology strategies, taking appropriate educational measures to eliminate gender stereotypes regarding women in the field of technology;

6. *Encourages* Member States to consider the concluding observations and recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights concerning their reports to those Committees when formulating policies and designing programmes focused on the improvement of the situation of rural women, including those to be developed and implemented in cooperation with relevant international organizations;

7. *Invites* Governments to promote the economic empowerment of rural women, including through entrepreneurship training, and to adopt gender-responsive and climate-sensitive rural development strategies and agricultural production, including budget frameworks and relevant assessment measures, as well as to ensure that the needs and priorities of rural women and girls are systematically addressed and that they can effectively contribute to poverty alleviation, hunger eradication and food security and nutrition;

8. *Invites* the Commission on the Status of Women to give consideration to the issue of the empowerment of rural women in a timely and appropriate manner;

9. *Invites* Governments, relevant international organizations and the specialized agencies to continue to observe the International Day of Rural Women annually, on 15 October, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/136;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

80th plenary meeting
17 December 2015